

**Walden Acres,
Wokingham Road,
Hurst,
RG10 0RU**

**REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES
FOR GREAT CRESTED NEWT**

Dr. Jonty Denton (Chartered Ecologist) FRES FLS MCIEEM CECol



Prepared by

Dr. Jonty Denton *Bsc (Hons) D(Phil) FRES, FLS, MCIEEM, CECol*

(Chartered Ecologist)

31 Thorn Lane, Four Marks, Hampshire, GU34 5BX

Phone: (01420) 565647

SUMMARY

A reasonable avoidance measures (RAM) strategy was created to ensure that no harm /unforeseen impacts on the great crested population in the vicinity of Walden Acres, Wokingham Road, Hurst RG10 0RU. (GR: SU800733) and provides recommendations to ensure that the works can reasonably avoid or mitigate for any such effects.

The habitats in proximity of the property (especially the open ground between the potential breeding sites to the west) are very hostile to amphibians (close mown lawns/amenity grassland) and the rear garden is fenced off from the surrounding environment at ground level: Therefore, it is highly unlikely that GCN will be adversely impacted.

However, protocols to ensure that surface refugia are not created on site are included.

EXPERTISE

Dr. Jonty Denton Bsc (Hons) D(Phil) FRES FLS CEcol MCIEEM has studied and held handling licenses for Great Crested Newts since 1985. He produced the then largest countywide study of the species (Denton, J. (1991) The distribution and breeding site characteristics of newts (*Triturus* species) in Cumbria, England. *Herpetological Journal*. 1: 12, 549-554. He has carried out over 100 population assessments and translocation projects across England & Wales, relocating over 6600 GCN and establishing over a dozen new self-sustaining populations.

INTRODUCTION

Site Proposals

The proposals for the site would see the addition of a ground floor extension to the rear of the property. The later will require groundworks impacting the patio and lawn.

Background Data Search

A desk-based assessment was carried out using the DEFRA MagicMap website <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> to identify where GCN returns have been made in the area.

Great Crested Newts are protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 2010 from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. In addition Great Crested Newts and Common Toads are UK BAP Priority species and SPI.

According to DEFRA's MagicMap the nearest GCN return is from 2.2km to the south. However, a Local Environmental Records Centre data search provided by Wokingham Borough Council reports that sixteen ponds within 500m of the property curtilage which appear on OS maps. Of these, eight are within 250m and three within 100m. There are also records of great crested newts dating from 2004 in ponds located 35m and 60m south-east of the property but there are no longer any ponds extant in this area. The large pond 250m to the northwest as confirmed as still supporting GCN in 2024. Newts dispersing or returning to this pond could cross the site whilst on migration or utilise the hedges surrounding the property.

RAM (REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES)

Timing of works

In the unlikely event a GCN is found, works should be stopped and a qualified ecologist holding a GCN handling license should be contacted.

Work protocols

The grounds around the property are currently hostile to amphibians with mown amenity grassland on three sides and a gravel driveway to the south.

Building materials should be stacked only on hard standing areas and should be placed on pallets off the floor. Materials arising from foundation trenching should be removed ASAP, if temporary storage is unavoidable be placed on sheeting with sufficient area to be foldable back over the debris to prevent any animals entering the spoil.

No debris piles should be left onsite which could be utilised as refugia by amphibians, a skip should be employed throughout.

REFERENCES

English Nature (2001). *Great crested newt mitigation guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

JNCC (1998) *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual*. JNCC, Peterborough.